

**A Service of Remembrance: Robbie Reed
McDougal's Funeral Home
December 11, 2008**

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—

From whence comes my help?

**2 My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.**

**3 He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.**

**4 Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

**5 The LORD *is* your keeper;
The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.**

**6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.**

**7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.**

**8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.**

Call to Worship, Remembrance, Thanksgiving

**Robbie's family asked to have a hymn included in this service—
one that is a favorite for so many—and made even dearer to this
family because of it's been sung during the services of other
members of their family. It's the hymn that begins "I come to
the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses..."**

In the Garden by Austen Miles:

"I read...the story of the greatest morn in history: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet very dark, unto the sepulcher." Instantly, completely, there unfolded in my mind the scenes of the garden...Out of the mists of the garden comes a form, halting, hesitating, tearful, seeking, turning from side to side in bewildering amazement.

Falteringly, bearing grief in every accent, with tear-dimmed eyes, she whispers, "If thou hast borne him hence"...(If you've taken him away); then..."He speaks, and the sound of His voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Just one word from his lips, and forgotten the heartaches, the long dreary hours....all the past blotted out in the presence of the Living Present and the Eternal Future."

As we begin this time of worship, I invite you now to hear the Scripture passage that inspired this old hymn—the good news that serves as the basis for our hope in the face of death:

John 20:1, 13-16

1Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

v.12 Mary saw 2 angels dressed in white in the tomb:

13They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

So, Mary Magdalene was the first to see and spend time with the risen Lord, the first to know the hope we have because Christ conquered death and the grave, the first to experience the joy of the Gospel of the victorious Christ... so, as the hymn says so beautifully, "and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known."

Solo: 1) I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.

***And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.***

2) He speaks, and the sound of His voice,
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.

"Raboni—Teacher," Mary cried. So what did this Master teach us concerning death?

"Let not you hearts be troubled..." John 14:1-3

**"I am the resurrection and the life.
He that believeth in me..." John 11:25-26**

Prayer

Earlier, we read a passage that tells the Easter story, but I want to share with you now a selection that is often read as Christmas approaches. I was touched while talking to Robbie's family Tuesday morning when Jennie told me about a devotional Robbie was reading. The Scripture spoke of a "reed"—spelled just like their family name.

The Bible often mentions reeds, but this particular passage spoke of “a bruised reed.”

Robbie read the passage and in her weakened condition, she said, “Look at what this says, momma—“a bruised reed. That’s me,” she said. “That’s me—a bruised and battered reed.”

Well, really, that’s all of us, Robbie—but we know what you were saying. Some seem more bruised than others, and Muscular Dystrophy had certainly injured and bruised Robbie in ways far beyond what most of us will ever have to experience.

The passage is found in **Isaiah 42:1-10a**:

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him
and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.

3 A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

4 he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope."

5 This is what God the LORD says—
he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread
out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its
people,
and life to those who walk on it:

6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,

7 to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

8 "I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
or my praise to idols.

9 See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
I announce them to you."

10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the ends of the earth...

Long before Christ's birth, the prophet Isaiah is pointing ahead to the One who would be born at Christmas, the Messiah, the Savior, Jesus Christ.

And in these words of prophecy, we hear a tenderness and compassion that points us to the One who centuries later came and said, "Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest...My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in your weakness."

That was another passage very precious to Robbie—"my strength is made perfect in your weakness."

She had a deep, abiding faith. There were many things that Robbie's illness prevented her from doing—but it didn't stop her from praying. Her prayer list was long, and often included persons she didn't even know--but she had heard of their need, so she prayed for them.

Jenny shared with me about one of her friends—Robbie didn't really know her--who went through some health problems. Robbie prayed for her and then got her mom to help her send a card with a note and Bible verse attached assuring this lady that she was being remembered.

Knowing Robbie's struggles with her own health issues, this lady was very moved by this expression of prayerful concern. Robbie was a genuinely caring person.

Now, with Christmas fast approaching, I must tell you another story, this one from Robbie's childhood. She probably had MD all along, but there were several years when there was no indication of her disease. She was quite active, riding her big wheel, swimming, and jumping on the trampoline.

But this story happened in church. Robbie was five. She loved music, and her children's choir was going to sing in church just before Christmas. As the children processed down the aisle, the congregation was singing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come..."

But not Robbie, with her pigtails swaying to the beat, she was singing at the top of her voice the Three Dog Night version: "Joy to the world, all the boys and girls. Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea. Joy to you and me."

I didn't hear if she got to the part about "Jeremiah was a bullfrog..." Come to think of it, though, you often find bullfrogs in the reeds. What a memory!

Robbie will often bring a smile to your faces when you remember her love for animals, especially cats and horses—and, oh, yes, TIGERS. She would dress in a purple nightgown and cover up with an orange blanket to listen to the Clemson games. Like her father before her, she was a BIG Fan!

You'll smile every time you remember these things and more. And you'll be inspired as you reflect on her Christmas cards with handwritten Bible verses inside--memories to cherish until you see her again.

Now, one more “reed verse” from the Bible. I don’t know what Robbie would have to say about this one, but I know what I want to say. It comes from Matthew’s account of the crucifixion. Jesus, in his suffering cries out from the cross:

Matthew 27:48--And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

Here, a reed was used to minister to Jesus as he suffered upon the cross. Jenny, you have been that kind of “reed” for Robbie—not by yourself, of course, but you’ve carried most of the load—and done so by personal choice—in your heart, the only choice a mother could make: to care for her child.

There is no more beautiful picture of our Heavenly Father’s care for us than a dedicated Christian mother caring for her child. You have provided the rest of us with a portrait of persistent love and patient compassion.

Now, however, you will need to make a huge adjustment to your world view—at least for awhile, Jenny—from care **giver**, to care **receiver**. It won’t be easy, but let it happen so God and His grace and the family members and friends, the brothers and sisters in Christ who want to be instruments of His grace, can care for you and help you heal.

You’ve begun already. When you told me early Tuesday morning what Robbie would have been facing had she left the hospital with the feeding tube, and then told me that you knew God had blessed her and all of you by taking her on home, it told me two things:

- 1) that you know that Robbie’s healing is already complete; and
- 2) that your healing has begun.

For the last several years, Robbie has been “a bruised reed”—but she has also been a blessing to your family. What a blessing now to know that she is healthy and whole and in the presence of the Lord forever.

And Jenny, Johnny, and Sherry, and others who knew her well—if you think she loved Christmas here, just think what the celebration must be

like up there—whatever version of Joy to the World she may be singing!
Joy—Eternal Joy!

“Thanks be to God who gives us this victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ.” Amen.

Benediction

Committal at New Silverbrook Cemetery

James R. Thomason, Pastor
First Baptist Church
Anderson, SC